



Faith Family Encouragement

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HEADING OUT

A column by Joel Zander

It was the coldest day in January. I kept my boys inside a little longer than normal before sending them out into the sub-zero temperatures to wait for the school bus. They were getting a little anxious to get to the bus stop on time. To pass the time, I gave each a hug and spoke the blessing I normally give to them at half the usual speed. And then I sent them on their way at 8:08. By 8:11, they had strolled down our driveway and made it all the way to the next neighbor's driveway. Two more to go! So much for being in a hurry.

How do you send your children or other family members out for the day? Do you tell them that you love them and to have a good day? This is a great chance to send them off with a blessing. Sharing a blessing on the way out of the house will remind your family members that Jesus is with them - and perhaps increase their awareness of what Jesus is doing around them. This is an easy thing to do every day, taking just a few minutes at a time.

The blessing that I use is based off of Philippians 4:7, which says, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." I say, "God's peace guard your heart and mind in Jesus! I love you!" It's short and I hope it sends them off with a sense of confidence that Jesus is going with them to school (or wherever) and that He will give them His peace.

Of course, this kind of blessing can be applied in any situation where you are dropping off your child or saying farewell to anyone. You might even consider sneaking in a written blessing. If you pack a lunch or snack, you might drop a "Jesus' love" note in. What if you included this blessing of the gracious presence of Jesus and His love for them to see in the middle of the day? Even better!

There are many verses that can serve as a basis for a daily blessing in your family. Here are just a few verses and blessing ideas:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

"Be strong and brave because Jesus is with you wherever you go."

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

"You are baptized! You are in Christ! You are a new creation in Him!"

May God bless you as you continue to grow closer to Jesus every day a few minutes at a time!

